

Remarks/Arguments

Claim 1 defines a conveyor in which both the belt platform and the platform support are formed from a single sheet of metal, and the conveyor is constructed substantially without use of welding or threaded fasteners. The *International Search Report* cited a number of prior art references, but none of these disclose or suggest a conveyor as claimed.

All of the prior art conveyors are constructed using welding or threaded fasteners. Where the particular means of assembly is not stated, inspection of the embodiments illustrated shows numerous welded, bolted or screwed connections. The use of welding or threaded fasteners provides growth sites for bacteria, which are avoided by the conveyor of the present invention.

Independent claim 15 defines a conveyor in which both the belt platform and the platform support are formed from a single sheet of metal, and is shaped to promote self-cleaning by minimizing or substantially avoiding surfaces that are horizontal in use. All of the prior art conveyors have a substantial number of horizontal surfaces. These are surfaces on which food or other particles may collect, giving rise to potential hygiene problems.

Independent claim 28 defines a method of constructing a conveyor, which method substantially avoids use of welding or threaded fasteners. This claim distinguishes over the prior art for the same reasons given above for claim 1.

Prior art document WO 00/47499 (DOLAN) makes no reference to avoiding the use of welds or threaded fasteners. The drawings (see, Figs 1 and 2) show numerous components that are fixed to the conveyor using welded or threaded fasteners. This conveyor also includes a large number of horizontal surfaces and crevices. The other prior art documents all either show or describe conveyors having welded and/or threaded connections as well as many surfaces that would be horizontal in use.

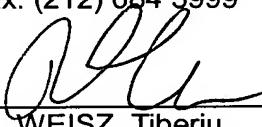
Applicant hereby states that by the amendments to claims 1-6, cancellation of claims 7-14, and insertion of new claims 15-30, no new matter is being added to the subject patent application.

Applicant respectfully requests consideration of the above and entry into the record.

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Respectfully submitted,

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